EPI Update for Friday, February 25, 2011 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- lowa influenza activity update
- Iowa e-Health plan receives federal approval
- Hepatitis B and glucose monitors
- New video: respiratory protection for healthcare workers
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Iowa influenza activity update

Influenza activity in Iowa continues to increase and remains widespread for this reporting week. The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness, the number of influenza associated hospitalizations, and the number of schools with 10 percent or greater absence due to illness have all increased over previous weeks. The State Hygienic Laboratory continues to identify three strains of influenza viruses (influenza (A) H3N2, (A) H1N1, and B). Iowans who have not yet gotten their seasonal influenza vaccine should get it now. This year's vaccine protects against all three strains circulating in Iowa. Remember the three Cs: cover your coughs and sneezes; clean your hands; and contain germs by staying home when ill.

To see the weekly Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network Report, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp.

Iowa e-Health plan receives federal approval

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has received notice that the Iowa e-Health Strategic and Operational Plan has been approved by the federal Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. This releases funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to be used over the next four years to implement a statewide health information exchange (HIE) in Iowa.

The Iowa HIE will be a hub connecting disparate electronic health records systems. At minimum, the HIE is an alternative to traditional paper or fax forms of communication among providers. Over time, HIE services (e.g., exchange of a continuity of care document) will support broader health reform goals, including improved health care quality, safety, and efficiency. The goal is to begin implementing the HIE this year.

The Iowa e-Health Strategic and Operational Plan was developed by IDPH in conjunction with the e-Health Executive Committee and Advisory Council as part of a public and private collaboration. For more information, visit www.lowaeHealth.org.

Hepatitis B and glucose monitors

This month the CDC reported six fatalities from acute Hepatitis B virus infection (HBV) associated with blood exposure from the sharing of reusable fingerstick lancing devices which were approved for single patient use only. This breakdown in infection control practices in an assisted-living facility in North Carolina resulted in eight cases of HBV and six fatalities in the 87 residents of the facility. Reusable fingerstick lancing devices approved for single patient use must be dedicated to a single patient and not used on other patients. The dangerous practice of sharing blood glucose monitoring equipment has resulted in 16 outbreaks of Hepatitis B nationally between 2004 and 2010. For more information, visit

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6006a5.htm?s_cid=mm6006a5_w.

New video: respiratory protection for healthcare workers

OSHA has produced a 33-minute training video for healthcare employers and workers on the proper use of respirators to help improve protection against airborne hazards in healthcare settings. Along with explaining the differences between the different types of respirators and face masks, the video includes information on fit-testing, medical evaluations, training, and maintenance of respiratory protection programs. To download this large file (230 MB), visit www.dol.gov/dol/media/webcast/20110112-respirators/

Meeting announcements and training opportunitiesNone

Have a healthy and happy week!
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